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Domestic Architecture of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

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have the effect of attracting persons more competent than the writer to the study of the ancient state of horticultural science in this country. To alter slightly the meaning of Lawson, who may be justly esteemed the Izaak Walton of gardeners; what "an hinderance shall it bee ** to the common good, that the unspeakable benefits of many hundred yeares, shall be lost by th'audacious attempt of an unskilfull Arborist."

T. HUDSON TURNER.

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

OF THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES.

SOME houses of the twelfth century have been described in a former volume of this Journal, but as these were in a town and of a small size they could hardly be considered as types of the usual plan of a house of that period.

There is however no doubt that the arrangement was generally the same during that and the two following centuries. The house consisted of a hall with a building attached to each end of it. The hall was generally the whole height of the house, (but occasionally there were low rooms under it,) and was the usual living apartment for the whole family.

The building at each end of it was divided into an upper room called the solar, and a lower room which at one end was usually the cellar, and at the other the kitchen, at least this seems in some instances to have been the case, for the exact place of the kitchen is still an unsettled point, the cooking was probably sometimes carried on in the hall, and sometimes certainly in the open air, as represented on the Bayeux tapestry, and in the celebrated manuscript of the fourteenth century of the "Romaunt d' Alexandre," so extensively used by Strutt, in his Sports and Pastimes; but this was probably the case only on great and special occasions, it could hardly have been the ordinary practice. The upper room at one end was sometimes the chapel, but this does not appear to have ever been the general practice; the chapel was often a small room attached to the solar.

The first house to which we now wish to call attention, has we believe hitherto escaped observation, at least we have been unable to find any account of it, and Lysons does not even

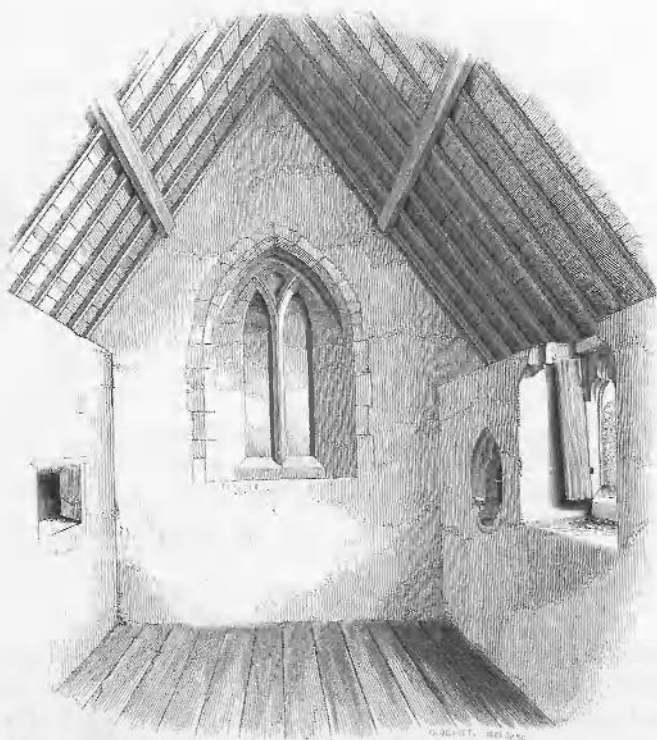
mention it. The name by which it is popularly known in the neighbourhood is the Monk's House. It is situated at Charney in the parish of Longworth, near Wantage, in Berkshire, close to the small church or chapel of Charney, but has a private chapel of its own, though the church being older than the house, it must always have been side by side with it. This may perhaps be accounted for by the circumstance that it was a grange belonging to the abbey of Abingdon, and the occasional residence of the abbot. In those days every manor had its grange, which was often a house of considerable importance, more what we should now call a manor house than a mere farm house, which we now commonly understand by a grange.

The present house consisted as usual of a hall and two transverse wings; the front of the hall has been rebuilt and its place supplied by a modern building divided into several rooms, but the foundations and part of the back wall appear to be original; it was about 36 feet by 17. The two wings are nearly perfect, the front gables are in the same plane with the front of the hall, but they extend much farther backwards, and the south wing, which adjoins the church-yard, is lengthened still more by the addition of a chapel attached to the upper room at the east end, the principal front of the house facing the west. The place of the altar is quite distinct; the piscina and locker remain; the east window is of two lights quite plain, the south window a small lancet with a trefoil head, widely splayed; the roof is modern. It is separated from the larger room by a stone wall, with only a small doorway through it, and is itself so small (12 ft. 5 in. by 9 ft. 10 in.) that it appears to have been merely a private oratory for the abbot, or the two or three monks who usually inhabited the house. The whole of the details of this chapel, and of the rest of the original work in the house, belong to the latter part of the thirteenth century, the end of the reign of Henry the Third, or the beginning of Edward the First. If any of our readers who are familiar with court-hand, will examine the chartularies or other rolls of Abingdon abbey, which are preserved some in the British Museum, and others in the collection of Sir Thomas Phillips at Middle Hill, it is probable that the exact date of this building may be ascertained. The ground-floor of the south wing is divided into two rooms corresponding to the solar and chapel above, the larger room is 30 feet by 16, and has an original fireplace in it, the head of which is of the form so common at that

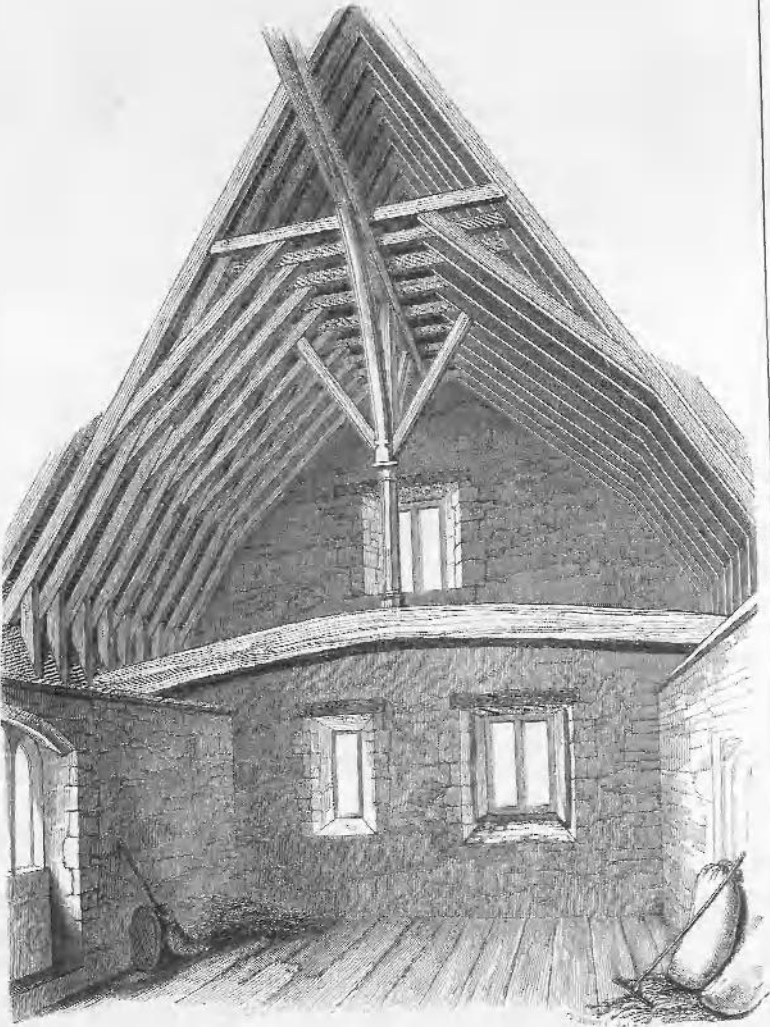
DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.



EXTERIOR OF CHAPEL AND SOLAR, CHARNEY.

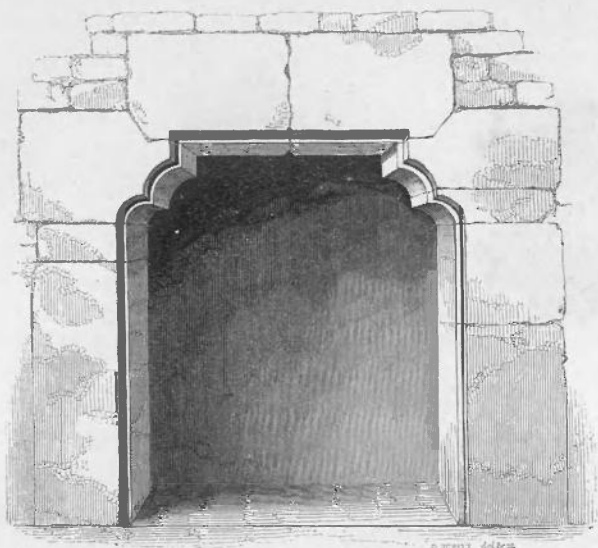


INTERIOR OF CHAPEL, CHARNEY

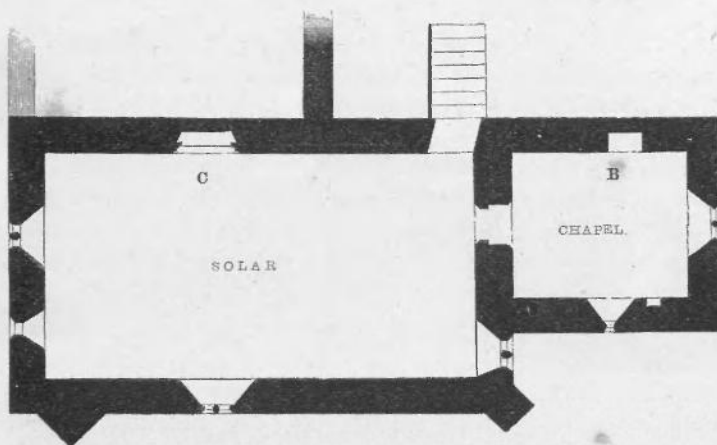


INTERIOR OF THE SOLAR, CHARNEY.

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.



FIRE-PLACE IN LOWER STORY OF SOUTH WING, CHARNEY



PLAN OF UPPER STORY OF SOUTH WING, CHARNEY.

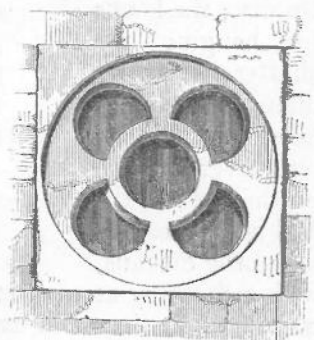
A. Piscina.

B. Ambry

C. Fire-place

period, called the square-headed trefoil ; and three original windows, two of them square-headed, the third at the east end, a double lancet ; it has a door into the court-yard, and had another into the hall. This room would appear to have been the kitchen, but the fire-place is not large enough for very extensive cooking. The small room under the chapel appears to have been a cellar, and is still used as such ; it has no windows but only small loops.

The solar, or larger room above, adjoining the chapel, has its original open timber roof, which although plain, is of good character ; it is canted, of seven cants, with tie-beam, king-post, and struts ; the king-post is octagonal, with square abacus, and base, which sufficiently indicate its date. The entrance to the solar is by steps from the yard, and it appears always to have been external and in the same situation, probably by a covered projecting staircase, opposite to one of the doors of the hall, traces of which still remain. The north wing has its walls nearly in their original state, though some windows and doors have been inserted, and the interior arrangements have been altered. In the west gable is a small quatrefoil window, or opening into the roof, and one of the upper rooms retains its original double lancet window ; there is also part of an original chimney, but the fire-place is of the fifteenth century.

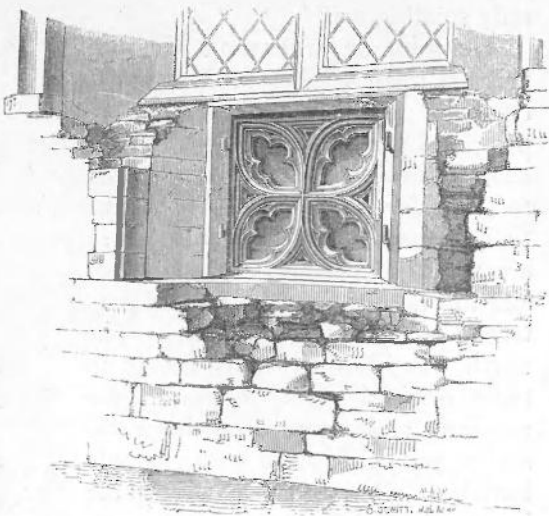


Window in the Gable.

At Sutton Courtenay, near Abingdon, is another house of about the middle of the fourteenth century, or the reign of Edward the Third, and in this instance the hall is nearly perfect, it measures 40 ft. by 23 ft. 10 in. ; its original open timber roof remains, it is very lofty, canted, and supported by king-posts with struts resting on wooden arches which rise from stone corbels, most of which are carved into heads, and one of these has the wimple ; the arches and purlins are well moulded with the quarter round and fillet. There are two windows on each side, which have originally been lofty, with pointed heads carried up through the roof in the manner of dormers, these have been altered, having been cut off at the transoms ; the alteration of the roof consequent upon this is very perceptible, the dormers over the heads of the windows having been removed, and on the outside these windows

being thus made square-headed, have wooden labels put over them; and a modern parapet of lath and plaster has been added^a: the lights below the transoms have never had glass fixed in them, but must have been closed with casements or shutters. This hall is now called the chapel, which it clearly was not.

It is very remarkable that under one of the windows of this hall is a low side window, the first that has been noticed in domestic work: this is nearly perfect on the inside, and has good Decorated tracery; the hooks for hanging the shutter also remain, but on the outside it is plastered over. At the north end of the hall is the passage called the Screens,



Low side Window

with a doorway at each end according to the usual arrangement still continued in use in our College halls: the framing of this passage is original, and the bays of the roof are made to agree with this arrangement.

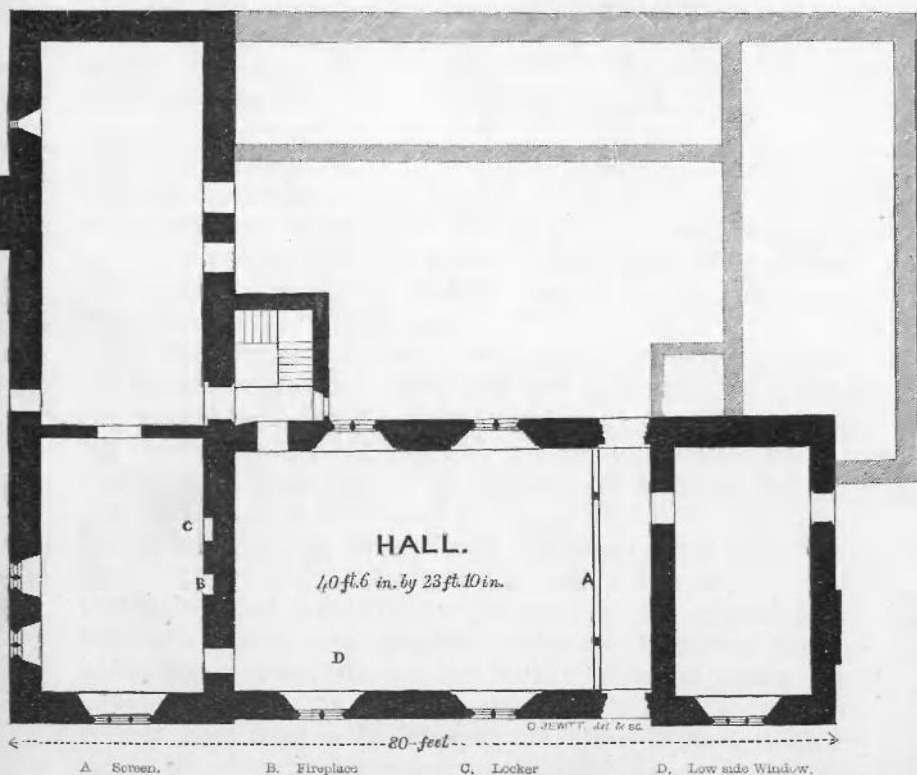
The two wings of this house have been more or less altered, one more than the other, being now used as the dwelling house; the south wing is more perfect, and in this is the solar, which was probably about 35 feet by 17 and the original open timber roof, which still extends the whole length of this wing, though part of it has been ceiled, and parted off into different rooms. This solar is lighted by two lofty Decorated windows of two lights with transoms, the one on the north side square-headed, that on the east pointed. In the room on the ground-floor there are remains of a fire-place; there are the corbels of one in the upper room, through the back of which at present an entrance is made by a ladder from the hall; one of these corbels rises from a ball-flower, the other from a twisted stem; the chimney belonging to the lower fire-place still re-

^a These windows have been restored in the woodcut annexed.



WEST FRONT, SUTTON COURTENAY, BERKSHIRE

(The windows of the Hall restored)



mains, and is an octagonal shaft battlemented. The original entrance to the solar is by an external covered staircase, opposite to a door at the north-east angle of the hall: the roof is exactly similar to the one at Charney, excepting that the mouldings of the capital are of later character, being here of decided Decorated work and not very early in the style.

The building is of stone with the exception of the upper part of the east wing, which is of wood. The windows both of the hall and of the solar are widely splayed, and have a hollow moulding running round the angle of the splay. The north wing does not extend backwards beyond the width of the hall. There are other buildings connected with this wing and forming part of the present mansion, but these are of subsequent periods: there are also offices to the east, completing the quadrangle, which appear to have been erected in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, when some other alterations were made in the building.

At Charney the fire-place on the ground-floor is more perfect, and evidently original, in both cases these rooms were probably the kitchens. In other instances the fire-places have generally been found in the upper rooms only, and not as in these cases on the ground-floor; no instance has yet been noticed of a fire-place on the ground-floor in the twelfth century: the finding them in the thirteenth and fourteenth and not in the twelfth may possibly be a mark of the progress of civilization.

This house at Sutton Courtenay is called by Lysons the rectory house, but this is a mistake; there is another rectory house in the village, and this is not on the rectorial farm. In the Saxon period the whole manor belonged to the abbey of Abingdon, but it was exchanged with King Kenulf for other land on which was the site of an ancient royal palace at or near Abingdon, "where the king's hounds and hawks were kept to the great annoyance of the convent." After the exchange we may presume that these were removed to Sutton, and it remained in the royal possession until King Henry the Second gave it to Reginald Courtenay, ancestor of the earls of Devon. It remained in the possession of that family until the attainder of Thomas Courtenay, earl of Devon, in the time of Edward the Fourth. At the time this house was built, the manor was therefore in the possession of the Courtenay family, and there is little doubt that they built it as their manor house. I.H.P.